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Message Text

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11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

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O R 201001Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2737
INFO USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL THESSALANIKI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
CINUSAFE RAMSTEIN
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1565

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR GR TU
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON TURKISH EXERCISES IN AEGEAN

REF: ATHENS 1505

1. IN VIEW OF THE GREEK PRESS PLAY ON UPCOMING TURKISH EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN (SEE REFTEL), "AN AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE" STATED FEBRUARY 18 THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WAS ADVISED THREE WEEKS AGO OF SUCH PLANNED MANEUVERS. THE STATEMENT ASSERTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONSIDER THE EXERCISES AS A PROVOCATION SINCE THEY ARE TO TAKE PLACE IN A DEFINED AREA IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND AIR SPACE. IN ANY EVENT, THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT
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"APPROPRIATE SURVEILLANCE" WOULD BE CARRIED OUT TO

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INSURE ADHERANCE TO INTERNATIONAL RULES AND TO PRECLUDE VIOLATION F GREEK WATERS OR AIR SPACE. FINALLY, THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT THE TURKISH EXERCISES BORE NO RELATION WHATSOEVER TO THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS PRESENTLY BEING HELD IN VIENNA AND THAT THE COINCIDENCE IN TIMING WAS FORTUITOUS.

2. EMBASSY AIR ATTACHE DISCUSSED MANEUVERS WITH HELLENIC AIR FORCE OFFICIALS FEBRUARY 19, AND THE LATTER DID NOT APPEAR TO EVIDENCE ANY DEEP CONCERN OVER THE PROGRAMMED TURKISH EXERCISES. HOWEVER, THEY DID POINT OUT TO AIR ATTACHE THAT PART OF THE AREA FOR WHICH THE TURKIS HAD REQUESTED THE GREEKS TO ISSUE A NOTAM (NOTICE TO AIRMEN) FELL WITHIN 8-12 MILES OF THE GREEK ISLAND OF LESVOS. ACCORDINGLY, IN ISSUING ITS NOTAM (189), THE GREEKS STIPULATED THAT TURKISH AIRCRAFT SHOULD APPROACH GREEK ISLANDS NO CLOSER THAN 10 MILES. THE TURKS CAME BACK AND ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THIS RESTRICTION IN THE NOTAM AND THE GREEKS IN TURN RESPONDED BY REASSERTING THEIR CLAIM TO SOVEREIGN AIR SPACE EXTENDING TEN MILES FROM GREEK ISLANDS. THE TURKS AS YET HAVE NOT REPLIED TO THIS LAST GREEK COMMUNICATION. EMBASSY DAO IS REPORTING FULL DETAILS SEPARATELY.

3. IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ASSERTION FEBRUARY 18 THAT "APPROPRIATE SURVEILLANCE" WOULD BE EXERCISED TO PRECLUDE VIOLATION OF GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS AND AIR SPACE, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT, AS A MINIMUM, THE GREEKS MIGHT POSITION NAVAL UNITS IN THE SECTOR OF CONTROVERSY. WHETHER TURKISH AIR UNITS WOULD CHOOSE TO "TEST" GREEK RESOLVE IN THIS MATTER IS PROBLEMATICAL. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT IN APRIL OF 1975 WHEN SEVERAL TURKISH MILITARY AIRCRAFT OVERFLEW THE ISLANDS OF SAMOS AND LESVOS, A HELLENIC AIR FORCE OFFICIAL TOLD DEFATT THAT GREEK ANTI-AIRCRAFT UNITS HAD IN FACT FIRED UPON ALL TURKISH AIRCRAFT THAT COULD BE TRACKED FROM THE GROUND (ATHENS DEFATT MSG 041455Z APR 1975). KUBISCH
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